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*To the memory
of John Hus*

BOHEMIA'S == CLAIM == FOR FREEDOM

with an introduction by
G.K. CHESTERTON.





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OLD HUSSITE WAR HYMN

Handwritten musical score for the Old Hussite War Hymn. The score is written on four staves with square neumes. It features two large decorated initials, 'B' and 'E', in black ink. The text is written in a Gothic script below the staves. The first staff begins with 'B' and the second with 'E'. The text is in Latin and Czech. The bottom of the page has the signature 'Smilg si not nung'.

Ye Soldiers of our God
 and of His Law,
 Him ye shall pray to,
 Him adore,
 And He shall crown the fight
 With victory.

'Tis He commands us,
 recking nought of death,
 For love of neighbours
 to resign our breath
 If need be. Courage, therefore,
 And be men!

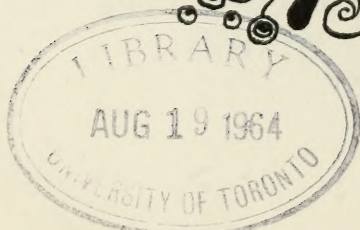
BOHEMIA'S CLAIM FOR FREEDOM

EDITED BY J. PROCHAZKA
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
G. K. CHESTERTON

PUBLISHED ON BEHALF OF
THE LONDON CZECH COMMITTEE
By CHATTO & WINDUS
MCMXV

DEDICATION

IN memory of the great man John Hus the London Czech Committee presents this little work to the English public. And as this act is but a token of our admiration of the noble death of John Hus for the cause of the intellectual freedom of Europe, even so in that same spirit should the reader open these few pages. We invite not criticism, but a sympathetic understanding. Those of our compatriots who had a free choice are dying to-day on the side of England, France and Russia. We look expectantly to the great day of Peace, when, we have the right to hope, our national aspirations will be crowned with the full independence of our beloved country; we desire to shake off the German yoke that weighed us down for so many unhappy centuries.



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INTRODUCTION

IT is to be feared that the average educated Englishman knows very little about Bohemia. Very likely he would never have known even that it has no sea-coast if Shakespeare had not inadvertently said that it had. But the present war is teaching the English what their schoolmasters, for some reason, have never taught them—a little history and geography. And the ancient though fallen kingdom of Bohemia, like the ancient though fallen kingdom of Poland, is likely to play a considerable part in the coming resurrection of the nations. Austria has been to Bohemia, as to Poland, an influence almost more unpardonable than that of the savages of Prussia, not because she did worse, but because she knew better. Austria built, and is still building, her power upon the ruin of Christian countries which have been her own bulwarks against the heathen. As she repaid the rescue by Sobiesky with annexation, and the Crusade of Servia with conspiracy, so she owed her possession of Bohemia to the Moslem victory at Mohacz.

Austria has never grudged the blood of her neighbours in defence of her religion. But the Prussianised Austria of to-day is confronted in Bohemia and elsewhere with something which the Prussianised spirit can never understand—the rejuvenation of defeat. An English neo-pagan poet said that only one god had ever died: but he might have added that only one has ever risen from the dead. This conception of the birth that

begins in death is inconceivable to the northern barbarian; and the immortality of the martyred nations bewilders and confounds him. These small Christian States not only survive defeat, but celebrate defeat. They date from defeat; not, like the heathens *ab urbe condita*, but rather *ab urbe capta*. The Bohemian song and proverb says, "More was lost on Mohacz's field," as the English (perhaps recalling their naval adventures) say, "Worse things happen at sea." And a modern Servian sculptor is planning a colossal monument for the scene of the Servian ruin at Kosovo. The Prussians have no colossal monument upon the field of Jena.

G. K. CHESTERTON.



*Johnes hno Magister in vrbis Quarethologie Baccalarius
Præcipi Rector et prædicator verbi ihu xpi in Capella s.*

THE COUNTRY OF THE BOOK AND THE CUP

IT was a prominent Scottish divine who thus characterised Bohemia, and she is indeed most deservedly entitled to the designation. The Restitution of the Word of God and the Sacramental Cup to the Laity were her ideals for two hundred years, the most glorious epoch of her history (1415-1620), and her loyalty to these ideals placed her in the van of the Reformation, and is shedding still a sombre lustre on the catastrophe that befell her. Her tragic sin, says a historian, is that of being too small against the formidable powers, that opposed her, and finally crushed her.

"The Cup," says E. Denis in his "Fin de l'Independence Bohème," "was the symbol of the purging of the Temple, the Saviour reinstalled upon his throne, the liberty of God's truth regained, paradise reopened, crimes eradicated, commonwealth purified, enemies defeated, victory of the national tongue achieved—all this was implied in the firm resolve not to forsake the Cup, in spite of any sufferings." This is the clue to the Hussite reformation in Bohemia. And the source of the inspiration and energy displayed in

those unparalleled struggles, the torch lighting the way towards that ideal goal, was the Book, which "the meanest Hussite woman knew better than any Roman priest." (Pius II.)

The ancient Bohemians were very fond of discussing religious and philosophic questions. It was the disputation concerning the forty-six articles drawn from the writings of John Wycliffe, that enflamed the University of Prague and led to the subsequent disasters. Tracts written during the Hussite wars (1419-1468) were innumerable, and there are still hundreds of them existing, while the invention of printing rather enhanced than diminished the productiveness of the authors of the following age. The output of a man like John Amos Komensky is simply prodigious. And his works are not merely numerous, they are of an intrinsic merit and value. Peter Chelcicky, too, is on a level with the best pulpit orators in the church of all ages, and one of the most trenchant sociologists. The authors of the Commentaries to the Kralice Bible are first-rate theologians, and John Amos Komensky's works are of world renown. The Bohemians proudly call this era their golden age. But the anti-Reformation put a cruel stop to it, and stunned that spirited nation for centuries.

The orders dealing with heretics, which attempted to frighten them out of their belief and to beguile them of their treasures, were nowhere else surpassed in stringency. The hiding and reading of forbidden books meant death. The last victim of these execrable laws in Bohemia was the forrester Thomas Svoboda, sentenced to

death at the stake in 1755 for reading the Bible, who by way of mercy was strangled before being burnt. The books seized upon were publicly committed to the flames, while missionaries addressed the people on the eternal punishments of heresy.

Some of the confiscated books were supplied by the emigrants who found a shelter either in Saxony or in Prussia and smuggled the books across the frontiers. Those who exported them did so in the very teeth of death, and their memory is kept alive by their martyrdom. To these dauntless men the later Protestant Church in Bohemia and Moravia owes a great debt. It was they who fed in the deep night the flickering lamps of faith, upraised the sinking hearts, until the day when the streaks of religious toleration shot above the horizon and announced the approach of religious liberty. But, alas! how sad and desolate was the country, once so flourishing, and what amends could ever be made for the irretrievable losses of the past!

Three books stand out as of striking importance and significance in the spiritual and moral development of the Bohemians: the Bible, the Postilla, and the Hymn Book.

Nowhere else does the Bible appear as such a mine of national instruction as in Bohemia.

The Bible influenced directly and indirectly a vast portion of the Bohemian literature. The Bible was the dearest treasure in every family, and the most precious bequest a father could leave to his son. Interesting are the passages in the last deeds of dying parents which make a

bequest of the Bible to their heirs. It remains always an object of wonder how it was possible that the Unity of Brethren undertook to publish an edition of the Bible in six big volumes when there were so many excellent editions, as that of Melantrich and Severin, already in circulation. And it seems all the more wonderful when one knows that the same work had three times to be republished within a few years, in a nation numbering then no more than about five millions.

During the persecution (1620-1781) all the Bibles that were clandestinely imported into Bohemia and Moravia were printed abroad by the emigrants.

As regards the modern circulation of the Bible in Bohemia, the Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society writes as follows.

"The Society has had a very interesting work in the country, as you know, for many years. Apparently we have put into circulation in the Bohemian language:—

325,492 Bibles and Old Testaments.

817,222 New Testaments, with or without the Psalms.

647,819 Portions of the Bible, not less than a single book.

10,000 Diglot Gospels (Bohemian-English in parallel columns).

This makes a total of 1,800,533 volumes. I have not included in these figures the circulation of 1914. In that year we only circulated 44,235 volumes."

The Roman Catholic Church, too, has published

several beautiful editions of the Bible during the last fifty years, and those who have learnt to read the signs of the times, declare that: "Nobody can deny the existence of a deep religious spirit in modern Bohemia. Attempts to explain this may vary, but the facts leave no room for doubt that every day the connection between religion and life grows stronger. Religion demands attention, and the interest in it is growing."

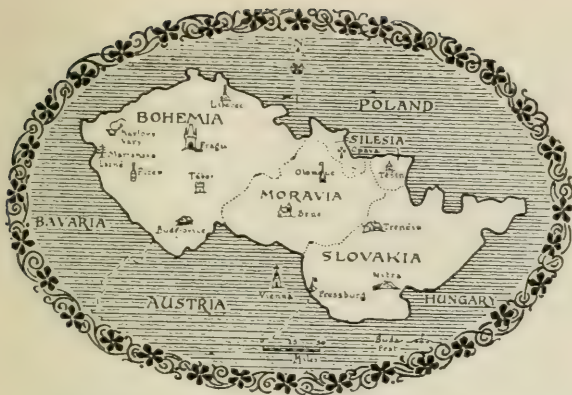
The Bible has not spoken as yet its last word in Bohemia. "Sad was the fate of the bodily tabernacles of our once great minds," says a historian. "The ashes of John Hus and Jerome were cast by the enemies into the Rhine. The tomb of Zizka was broken up and smashed in 1622, and in the same year the bones of Rokycana and the heart of King George were burned in the cemetery of the Tyn Church by the Jesuits. The bones and dust of Zerotin suffered a barbarous desecration in 1722. But there is no power that could annihilate the spirit of these our heroes. As soon as the doleful time that shut our nation into darkness of ignorance had passed away, this spirit began to act creatively at the resurrection and moral renewal of our people." May it continue to do so. The present spiritual state of the nation is felt to be contradictory to the past, and the national mind is groping after a new thread that may lead it out of the dismal labyrinth of inward inconsistency.

The *Postilla*—i.e., the book of sermons and expositions read on Sabbaths and festivals in the churches—became very early the indispensable companion of the Bible.

The Postilla of Chelcicky is, beside the "De regulis" of Mathew Janovsky, the most remarkable product of the Bohemian mind. Its terse diction, its deep human insight, its profound awe before God and his Word, its spirit of thorough submission to Jesus Christ, its stirring appeals to man and his need of regeneration, its scorn of oppression and love of the oppressed, its buoyant hope in the victory of Christ's Kingdom, all this made the Postilla of Chelcicky another Apokalypsis to the nation. It was printed in 1522 and 1532.

As for the Hymns, they were unknown, in the vernacular, before the time of John Hus. He first introduced them in the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague. The people welcomed this innovation with enthusiasm, and the collections of hymns called "Kancionaly" (hymnals) are, next to the Bible, the most important books in devotional use. The Unity of the Bohemian Brethren, especially, took the utmost pains in the preparation of these hymn-books. They are, indeed, peculiar to Bohemia. Being the property of Associations of Choirsingers ("Literatske Sbory"), they were written on parchment, adorned with magnificent initials and miniature paintings, bound in costly covers, and were the pride of the fraternities which counted among their members nobles, scholars, and burghers. There was scarcely a town in Bohemia that could not boast some such treasure of art. Their price now is their weight in gold. A great many of them went abroad along with other spoils during the thirty years war.

C. DUSEK.



SHORT SURVEY OF BOHEMIAN HISTORY

BOHEMIA, forming part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, has had a glorious past. It is inhabited by the Czech branch of the great Slavonic race, and for fifteen hundred years has contributed largely to European culture. The fact that the Bohemians have not succumbed to strenuous efforts on the part of the Austrians to Germanise them speaks well for their individuality. That they have preserved their nationality and evolved their own civilisation augurs well for the brilliant future which lies before them.

Bohemia is situated in the centre of the continent of Europe, and is divided by chains of mountains from the German countries—Prussia, Saxony, Bavaria, and Austria.

Count Lutzoﬀ has remarked that the struggle of the Czechs to resist the attempts of German princes to Germanise them forms a leading feature in the history of Bohemia. The modern Bohemian historians, Palacky and Tomek, consider that the Czechs settled in Bohemia about the second half of the fifth century (451), and that the collision between them and the neighbouring Germanic tribes began almost at once.

The early political institutions of the Czechs were of a representative character, even their princes were elected and all their national affairs were discussed in a Diet.

Later on there were signs of German efforts at centralisation, and the princes, by the aid of the Germans, gained some amount of autocratic power. Even the national Diet lost its influence for a time, but by the twelfth century this became less marked, and it was settled that the ruling princes could not make new laws without the consent of the Diet, and that they must also obtain its consent to a declaration of war, unless it were one exclusively for the purposes of defence. But even during the period when the influence of the sovereign was most felt, the princes had to submit to considerable restraint from the nobles who formed the Supreme Council.

Professor Liubavský of Moscow University has given a most vivid description of the growth of representative power amongst the Czech landed aristocracy. He also shows us the gradual formation of a municipal autonomy, established to combine local interests with those of the larger districts corresponding to the English counties.

"District Assemblies" were created, usually sitting during the session of the Courts, and these date as far back as the eleventh century.

That century also saw the approaching realisation of the national aspirations of the Czechs under Bretislau I (1037-1055), whom Palacky calls the restorer of Bohemia. Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and Poland were united under one ruler, and as Count Lützoﬀ remarks, "The idea of a West Slav Empire seemed on the point of being realised, but Germany stepped in to prevent the formation of a powerful Slav State on her borders."

Germany, however, realised that she would never make her influence paramount by sheer force of arms, so she adopted other methods. She resolved to foment the quarrels and petty jealousies which were rife amongst the aspirants to the throne of Bohemia, and in the soil ready to her hand she sowed the seed of discord and unrest. She even went so far as to aid by force of arms in the struggles between rival princes or between a prince and his nobles, thus laying the foundation of that policy "divide et impera," which has ever since been so faithfully followed by the Austrian monarchs.

Beside this the Germans endeavoured to strengthen their influence by marrying their princesses to Bohemian princes, a rôle which has been played by them in Slavonic countries right down to the present day, and has caused no little internal dissension, and partly accounts for the collision which was the forerunner of the present war.

Says Count Lützoff: "These princesses often brought in their train German chaplains and other dependants, and the Bohemian nobles also acquired the German language, and to a certain extent it became the language of the Bohemian Court, the German princesses naturally teaching their native tongue to their children from their infancy."

The height of this influence was reached in 1256, when the Czech king, Przemysl II, took the German name of Ottokar, and when he married the Austrian Duchess Margarete.

This was the first attempt to combine the Crowns of Austria and Bohemia, but then, as now, this attempt was doomed to failure from the absence of any national basis for the combination. But the failure has not been without a good influence, for it turned the Czech mind definitely towards the traditions of the great national Princes Svatopluk, Boleslav, and Bretislav, and made them realise the danger of any attempt at combination with the German nation, and showed them at the same time that their salvation lay in the development of their own national characteristics and the preservation of the Slavonic spirit.

This national awakening of Bohemia, which was increasingly manifest in subsequent years, showed that the Czechs as a nation had adopted the wisest course, and it culminated in 1310, when King John was induced to grant a great number of popular privileges, very much like Magna Charta, thus resigning all right to foster German influence in his country. King John will be re-

membered in England as the blind warrior who died at Crécy.

The crowning manifestation of the national spirit in politics and the golden age in Bohemian history came with the advent to the throne of King Charles I (1346-1378). He had been educated in France and spoke the French, German, and Bohemian languages with equal facility, though he preferred Bohemian.

His principal qualification for the throne was his complete grasp of the part that Bohemia ought to play in the history of the world, and the importance of the retention of her own language in the attainment of her national ideals. He allowed both German and Bohemian to be spoken in the town councils, but steadily refused to countenance the giving of official appointments to Germans who could not speak the national language. He insisted that the children of Germans settling in Bohemia should be taught the native language and obtained the Pope's permission to use it in all church services, and in numerous other ways gave an impetus to the development of the Bohemian language and literature.

Early in his reign (1348) he founded the University of Prague, which preceded that of the German University by more than fifty years and was the first institution of its kind in that part of Europe.

In 1356 Charles, as Emperor, published his famous "Golden Bull" in which were set forth rules and regulations for the election of future German Emperors. A very important part of

this edict was that defining the future relations of Bohemia to the German Empire. This re-affirmed the independence of Bohemia as a kingdom and placed it on a different footing from the other possessions of the German Crown. One of the principal differences was that in case of the failure of an heir to the throne, Bohemia was not to become a German subject State, enabling the German emperors to bestow it as a fief, as in the case of some other principalities under Germany, but it was to have the right, through its Diet, to elect a king. The King of Bohemia was to be absolute sovereign in all the internal affairs of the country, and the German Emperor was to have no authority whatever in them; there could be no appeal to him from any of the subjects of the Bohemian king, as there was with other dependent principalities.

This complete autonomy was not infringed by Charles I's successors and the kings of Bohemia had even a right to declare war and conclude treaties.

Professor Liubavsky points out that the fifteenth century saw the last tie broken between the kings of Germany and the kings of Bohemia. King Wenceslas IV (1378-1419), who in 1400 was deprived of his title of King of the Romans, took no oath of allegiance to Germany, neither did Sigismund nor his successors, King Albert and Ladislas Posthumus (1439-1457).

The next elected King of Bohemia, George of Podebrad, received a Charter from Frederick III of Germany in which were confirmed all the ancient privileges of Bohemia, including those contained in the Golden Bull.

In another Charter granted in 1462 the independence and autonomy of Bohemia were still further emphasised. By it was established the rule that the King of Bohemia should be invested with all his kingly dignities inside his own frontiers. Many other privileges were mentioned with regard to the Army and the rights of the Emperor over Bohemia.

In 1500 and 1512 the entire German Empire was divided into ten circuits, two Lord-lieutenants being placed at the head of each, whose duty it was to see that the decisions of the Imperial Court were duly carried out, to collect the Imperial taxes, and to undertake recruiting for the Army. It is worthy of note that Bohemia never formed any part of these circuits, and was never in any way put under the jurisdiction of the German Imperial Court nor under the authority of the Lord-lieutenants.

Louis I (1516-1526), the last Bohemian king to come to the throne before the advent of the Hapsburgs, never made any request for investiture by the German Emperor.

Charles V of Hapsburg acceded to the wish of his brother Ferdinand and issued an edict by which he confirmed all the ancient liberties and privileges of Bohemia. Thus, as Professor Liubavsky rightly remarks, Bohemia came under the sceptre of the Hapsburgs as an independent and autonomous kingdom. Later on, as is well known, this was denied by the Hapsburgs.

The importance of the Act of 1310 and of the Golden Bull for the future development of Bohemia cannot be over-estimated. It shows us

that a constitutional régime was firmly established at a time of the absolute reign of autocracy in Germany. It also shows to what a high degree of political consciousness the people had attained: and all this at a time when the most complete slavery was in force in the German-speaking countries; the constitution in Germany as we know it being granted as late as 1848, and that of Austria in 1849.

JOHN HUS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

ONE very potent factor in the situation was the German attempt to subjugate Bohemia by the influence of the Church. The first attempt to introduce Christianity was made as far back as the ninth century, but the political aims of German missionaries were so evident that all their efforts were frustrated.

Christianity was introduced by Borivoj and his wife Ludmila. They were in Moravia, where Cyril and Methodius propagated the Gospel, having been sent for that purpose from Constantinople. As the services were conducted in the Slavonic language, the new religion soon became popular amongst the masses; but in the reign of Boleslav II, the Pope extended his influence to Bohemia, Prague became a bishopric, and the Slavonic liturgy was superseded by the Latin. "This was strongly resented by the people, and was a bone of contention for centuries, finally

leading to the Hussite movement and subsequent wars."

The hero and the first martyr of this movement was John Hus.

Count Lützoff rightly remarks: "It is probable that the national and religious aspirations of Bohemia would not have attained the world-wide importance they now possess had it not been for John Hus, who is without doubt the most prominent representative of the Czecho-Slav race in the whole of history."

Dr. W. N. Schwarze, in a monograph on Hus which has just appeared, puts the date of the birth of this great Czech reformer at 1369 or 1373, Count Lützoff and others as 1373 or 1375. He was born in the village of Husinec near Prachatice in the southern part of Bohemia and close to the Bavarian border.

"The place of his birth," says Schwarze, "is deserving of notice in that the racial strife which plays so great a part in Bohemian history always raged most fiercely where the domains of Germany and Bohemia meet." So from his early youth John Hus was, so to say, in the middle of the struggle, and his keen intelligence, early awakened, must have been busy with the thought how best to oppose German influence. He took his inspiration from the people.

After completing his elementary and secondary studies in the provincial schools he repaired to Prague, where he took his Master's degree in the University in 1396. Bohemian histories are silent as to the cause which led John Hus to select the faculty of theology for his study. But there seems



to be little doubt that he understood well that the spiritual freedom of the nation must form the basis of her political freedom. This was surely also the main cause which led him to embrace the doctrine of Wycliffe, which was the pure exposition of the rights of the individual towards the Church. Subsequent events in the University confirmed him in the necessity of reforms. The Germans tried their best to make their influence bear upon the life and character of the University.

At that time the administration of the University was entrusted to officials selected by representatives of the four nations into which students and teachers were divided. Each nation had one vote—an arrangement which made it easy for the foreigners to combine and defeat the wishes of the Bohemians.

As early as 1385 the Bohemians had attacked



the policy of appointing foreigners to the chief offices of the University, but the crisis came in 1409, when King Wenceslas, yielding to the National Party, by the decree of Kutna Hora, changed the system of voting; henceforth the Bohemians were given three votes and the combined foreign nations only one. Thereupon five thousand German students with their professors left in a body and founded the University of Leipzig.

That John Hus played an important part in bringing about this change is confirmed by the fact that at that time he was a Confessor of Queen Sophia, wife of Wenceslas, and was elected rector of Prague University immediately after the crisis. At this time the personality of Hus was shaped in that form which ever afterwards won the admiration even of his enemies. "Meanly born,

but of no mean spirit " was the characterisation of John Hus by one of his opponents.

Speaking on Hus at this time, Mr. W. N. Schwarze writes:—

"Hus searched for truth, and the truth as he found it in the Bible was the foundation on which he built. So long as he saw no difference between the teaching of the Scriptures and the doctrines of the Church, he did not antagonise the latter. He was willing to give up any opinion he held whenever he met with a sounder opinion. His abilities and personal force were soon recognised by the Bohemian doctors at the University. A distinguished circle gathered around him."

In this respect John Hus is closely related to the great truth-seeker of our own times, Leo Tolstoi. It is a remarkable fact that both were Slavs and both strove to free the people from the bonds of the Church and to establish a life and social institutions founded on the principles laid down in the Gospel.

As a preacher, John Hus's activity is intimately connected with the Bethlehem Chapel. In all the other churches of Prague the immense encumbrance of Roman rites and ceremonies left no sufficient opportunity for preaching the Gospel. The amazing success of his ministry was not, however, merely the result of extraordinary eloquence, but was largely due to the practical advice as to the affairs of everyday life with which his sermons abounded.

About this time the burden of taxation in Bohemia became almost intolerable, and, to quote Mr. Ernest F. Henderson, "no church office or

benefice, no exemption or dispensation, no hope of future preferment, not even the forgiveness of sins could be won without a cash payment. The Court of Rome gave nothing without payment; the very gifts of the Holy Ghost were for sale."

The movement against these abuses began as a spiritual one, and as such was greatly favoured by the Royal Family and the Court, who felt keenly the necessity of national emancipation from German influence as propagated by the Roman Church. As time went on the agitation became more democratic, with a distinctly expressed tendency towards social reorganisation, a kind of precursor of Christian Socialism.

It goes without saying that such an impulse could not continue for long unchallenged by the dominating Church. The relations between Hus and Rome became especially strained when, by order of the Pope, Wycliffe's writings were publicly burned and soon afterwards Hus, who continued to preach, was excommunicated by the Archbishop of Prague.

The climax was reached, however, when the envoys of Pope John XXIII, who came to Bohemia in order to sell indulgences and to collect funds required by the Pope for the war against King Ladislas of Naples, were publicly denounced by John Hus. The city of Prague was laid under an interdict, and the churches closed. Hoping by his own voluntary retirement to settle the conflict, Hus left Prague, and this was really the beginning of the end for him.

During his exile of twenty months he wrote fifteen books in the Czech language; he purified

the language and gave it fixed rules of etymology, he also invented a new system of orthography.

Meanwhile the German Emperor, Sigismund, managed to induce the Church authorities to call a Council at Constance to settle the question of the Great Schism, and at the same time he resolved to put an end to the movement of emancipation in Bohemia. Hus was summoned to appear before the Council to justify his conduct.

Relying upon the Emperor's promise of a safe conduct, a fair hearing, and a free return to Bohemia, Hus answered the summons and appeared before the Council; but immediately upon his arrival in Constance he was cast into prison and ordered to make a general recantation of all heretical doctrines taught by him. This he indignantly refused, as to do so would have been to act against his conscience. Whereupon he was solemnly excommunicated, and after a long weary trial was burnt at the stake on the 6th of July, 1415.

So much for the Emperor Sigismund's "safe conduct." It would thus appear that treating a written promise as merely "a scrap of paper" was by no means initiated by the present Emperor of Germany!

John Hus died as nobly as he lived. "The executioner's torch," says W. Schwarze, "kindled a conflagration in Bohemia." The King died of rage, leaving no heir to the throne, his brother Sigismund being rejected for his known German sympathies and for the stain of having been privy to the murder of Hus.

"Nothing could induce us," was the decision of the Bohemians, "to recognise as king the man who had put to death our saint and hero!"

In the struggle which followed the Bohemian people rallied as one man round their leaders, and the military exploits of Zizka, Prokop the Great, and Prokop the Little were handed down in the history of Bohemia as the most brilliant testimony to the invincibility of a nation fighting for its ideals.

Even the army of crusaders called together by the Pope and consisting of Germans, Hungarians, Croatians, Dalmatians, Bulgarians, Wallachians, Saxons, Austrians, Bavarians, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Poles, and a few Englishmen, was unable to conquer the Czechs, and finally, after seventeen years of struggle, Sigismund had to give way and to beg Pope Martin V to concede the principal demands of Bohemia.

The Utraquists, so-named from their demand that the Holy Communion should be administered in both kinds, and comprised of the Czech nobility and the more Conservative Nationalists, carried the day against "Taborites," sometimes called the Extreme Reform Party, who demanded the reconstruction of society on the principles laid down in the Gospel. These two parties formed the nucleus of the two modern political parties in Bohemia.

The next period of Czech history is marked by a series of conflicts between the people and the German kings, the latter backed by the popes endeavouring to force Bohemia back into the Catholic Church. All these attempts were de-

feated by the invincible will of the nation. At length peace was restored by the election of King George of Podebrad, under whom Bohemia prospered as she had done under Charles IV. To quote Count Lützoff:—

“King George has always dwelt in the minds of the Bohemian nation as the king, next to Charles IV, whose memory the Czechs treasure most. But, nevertheless, the fate of Bohemia was sealed. She could not sustain a struggle of indefinite duration against almost the whole of Europe, and her power of resistance was for the time weakened.

“At the battle of the White Mountain (1620), between the Catholic King of Germany, Ferdinand, and Frederic, the elected King of Bohemia, the latter was crushed and the party in Bohemia which had struggled so long for religious liberty suffered a defeat, and for three hundred years Bohemia was removed from the list of independent nations and had to suffer under the German yoke. Twenty-seven of the leading nobles of Bohemia who had not fled the country after this conclusive battle were executed in the market-place of Prague.”

Gindely, a Roman Catholic historian, says of this event: “These melancholy executions mark the end of the old and . . . independent Bohemia. Members of the most prominent families of the land, eminent citizens, in fact all the representatives of Bohemian culture died here, and with them their land. The history of the country henceforth was in the hands of foreigners who had neither comprehension of nor sympathy with its former institutions.”

The population of the country, which had numbered four millions, was speedily reduced to less than eight hundred thousand. Some were executed, many thrown into lifelong imprisonment, and, according to Slavata, thirty thousand Czech women wandered into exile. "The lands of the executed and exiled Protestants were confiscated and given to foreigners. The schools were closed, the national language suppressed, and the once famous University degenerated into a Jesuit college."

"Almost all the literature of Bohemia subsequent to Hus," remarks Count Lützoff, "was imbued with the spirit of that great reformer and patriot. All this was therefore doomed to destruction. If we except the classical literature, there is none which boasts so many books the existence of which can be proved with certainty, yet of which all traces are lost, as the older Bohemian writings. Jesuits, accompanied by soldiery, were empowered to search for heretical books in all Bohemian dwellings, from the castle of the nobleman to the hut of the peasant."

At the same time Ferdinand proceeded to alter the constitution of Bohemia in order that it might coincide with his own intolerant and autocratic religious and political notions. The Bohemian Crown was declared to be not elective, but hereditary in the Hapsburg line. The Germanising of the country was taken well in hand, and proceeded under the successors of Ferdinand for the next three hundred years.

But the national spirit of the Czechs could not be entirely crushed even by Hapsburgs and

Jesuits. Notwithstanding the most ruthless suppression of all attempts to revive the national language and the national rights, we see at the present time the Slavonic idea again rising triumphant over the whole of the country, and possibly we may soon witness the restoration of the independence of the kingdom of Bohemia.

THE EPOCH OF BOHEMIAN RENAISSANCE

THE end of the Thirty Years' War saw the end of Protestantism in Bohemia. But notwithstanding all the efforts of Rome and the Jesuits, five generations had not sufficed to make them real Roman Catholics, though officially belonging to the Catholic Church. In the depths of their hearts the people remain Protestant.

But the closer union between all classes of the Czechs, as the result of the oppression after the battle of the White Mountain, proved a great advantage to the nation and contributed greatly to the Bohemian renaissance.

In the period subsequent to the life and death of Hus the antagonism between the nobles, the townsmen, and the peasantry became very marked, to the great satisfaction of the German ruling class, who made use of these internal dissensions to strengthen their hold and further subjugate the people.

The Junkerism by which in our day Germany is endeavouring to rule the world is by no means a modern idea. Four hundred years ago, first the

German emperors and then the Austrian emperors of German origin tried to elevate the nobles by granting them special privileges to reduce the peasants to absolute serfdom and to abrogate the freedom of the townsmen. Thus the antagonism between the classes was encouraged, and the rule over the entire kingdom of Bohemia much facilitated.

But the oppression that has always distinguished the Hapsburg rule had the effect of changing this class antagonism into a very close union. During the latter part of this struggle for independence the Austrian police were given power to expel from any town those who were not resident there or were unable to prove that they had sufficient means of livelihood; thus the poorest of the patriots who came to Prague from other parts of the Empire were exposed to constant persecution. Then it was, according to Count Lützoff, that "Several patriotic noblemen assured the safety of the young enthusiasts by conferring upon them appointments as librarians or as tutors in their own families."

In a word the upper class was alive to the fact that in order to win for their country freedom from the foreign yoke, they must foster the love of freedom and try to develop it in individuals. Naturally, this meant the abolition of the serfdom introduced by Germany and never experienced in Bohemia before the influence of Germany became too strong. It also meant a *rapprochement* between the educated class and the masses, the real source of national aspirations and national strength.

After three centuries of German oppression the Czech language has remained as it was in the seventeenth century. But since that time science, art, literature, have developed, new ideas have sprung up, new terminology come into existence, and it has become impossible to clothe the new ideas and discoveries in the old language, which is lacking in the right expressions.

Here again the vital force of the Czech language has been put to the test, and incidentally proved Bohemia's right to take her place among the nations. A language which does not admit of development is a dead language, and the nation to which that language belongs is doomed to decay and death. The Czech language stood this severest of tests in the most triumphant manner.

The discovery in 1817 of the Kralodworsky Manuscript—although it was lately proved that this Manuscript is a literary forgery—gave a great impetus to the revival of Czech literature.

The following year saw the opening of the National Czech Museum, which, under the supervision of its first librarian M. Hanka, played a most important part in the further development of the language.

In 1830 the work of renaissance was crowned by the inauguration of the "Czeska Matice" Czech Fund, which is used to encourage the spread of the Czech language by the publication of the works of the best Czech writers.

This process of enlightenment received its finishing touch on the 3rd of June, 1848, at the historical congress at Prague, attended by three hundred and forty delegates sent by the various

Slavonic nations. A resolution was adopted claiming freedom for the citizens and independence for every nationality. The bayonets of the Austrian soldiers who dispersed the Congress were Germany's answer to these aspirations; but, notwithstanding the ruthless persecution and oppression which followed, the nation pursued the task to which it had set itself, and at the present day it is stronger and more vital than ever before.

The utter impossibility of suppressing the Czech genius with the aid of bayonets, the only force which the German-speaking world could oppose to this national upheaval, is best shown by the tenacity with which the Czech people through centuries of German influence have preserved their artistic tastes. The peasants' huts, the peasants' furniture, the peasants' dress, all bear the mark of national genius.

With touching fidelity this people has preserved from ancient times its poetry, its songs, and up to our own time it still preserves the style of national dress worn by its ancestors.

In "The Czech Peasant" Renata Tyrsova and Henry Hantich reproduce a fine specimen of the Czech peasant art, which proves more than any words can do the high culture attained by the Bohemian people at a time when the art of the conglomeration of nations which now call themselves Germans and Austrians were still in their infancy.

There is no doubt that Czech art suffered a good deal from the Germanisation of the country. In the centuries following the battle of the White Mountain, Czech national art only sur-

vived in its architecture, and even this was looked upon with contempt by the Austrian rulers.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century and up to the time of the Seven Years' War their architecture received splendid impetus, and the most beautiful buildings of Prague date from that period.

But towards the end of the eighteenth century, under the pressure of the German influence which was especially dominant in the reigns of Joseph II and Maria Theresa, Czech art was ruthlessly destroyed. Yet even now Prague is, perhaps, the most beautiful of all the capitals of the Slavonic races.

The revival of Czech painting dates from the foundation, in 1796, of the "National Society of Friends of Arts," and though at first traces of foreign influence might be detected, it soon developed on lines of its own and became a distinctly original national art.

These are in brief the achievements of the Czech nation, which is rightly claiming that at the conclusion of the war it shall form an independent State and become completely master of its own destinies.

Reading this short survey of her brilliant history and her wonderful struggle for independence, we think there can be very little doubt as to her justification for these claims.

SERGIUS CYON.

THE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE OF BOHEMIA

THE Bohemian language is the crystallisation of a great number of Slavonic dialects, of which, as the result of political conditions, that spoken in Bohemia by the ruling division of the Slavonic race, is the one that generally prevails.

The language as it is spoken at the present time must be divided into three groups: first, that used throughout the Kingdom of Bohemia; second, that of Moravia; and third, the dialect spoken by the Slovaks of North Eastern Hungary. The literary form of the language is that of Prague, but in course of time it has undergone numerous changes, so that it does not agree with any special dialect, but stands as the most cultivated example of the language used by any of the Slavonic family.

There are three periods recognised in the literary history of Bohemia. The first period ranges from the earliest written documents to the works of John Hus (1410). The next period takes us on to the reign of Joseph II (1774). Finally, the modern period extends from the end of the eighteenth century until the present time.

The ancient folklore, traditions, lyric and epic verse, with the fables and sayings, must be considered as the first fruits of the Bohemian literary tree; these were reproduced in later chronicles and other documents, the originals of which, unfortunately, have not been preserved.

By the more general adoption of the art of writing, and by the mighty regenerative movement caused by the acceptance of the Christian faith, a great development of literature was inaugurated. The scriptures were translated, hymns composed, and the saintly legends written.

The pious meditative spirit expressed itself in the composition of religious romance and descriptions of the passion. It is to be regretted that even of this period (ninth to fourteenth century) only a few of the original manuscripts have come down to us.

Chronicles and works of an historical kind are a prominent feature of this time. The most ancient is by Kosmas (1045-1125), who is called the father of Bohemian history.

The great immigration of Germans into Bohemia under the last kings of the Premysl dynasty awoke a strong national feeling. One of the fruits of this movement is a chronicle called "Dalimil's," written in Bohemian at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and it is full of patriotic feeling and love of country. Other writers of historical works about this period were Benes Krabice Weitmile (d. 1375), Vavrinec Brezove, the old Lord of Rozmberk, who wrote for the most part on the subject of law, and Ondrej Dube.

The decline of morals in the Roman Church caused an unprecedented agitation throughout the country, and a strong desire for reform was manifested by the people. The depravity of the clergy was attacked vigorously by pen and sermon by such men as Konrad Waldhauser, J. Milic,

Matez Janova, and Tomas ze Stitneho, who was the first to write in Bohemia on moral philosophy. This great movement culminated in the appearance of John Hus, who became the recognised leader in the great moral revolution. The earnest desire of the reformers for the restoration of purity in the Church is fully expressed in the copious theological literature of the time contributed to by Hus, and after him, amongst many others, by Petr Chelcicky (d. 1460), who was the spiritual founder of the later "Jednota bratrská" (Unity of the Brethren), which became the embodiment of the reforming spirit.

The invention of the art of printing and the contemporaneous spread of the knowledge of classic literature infused new life into Bohemian literature and at the same time brought a change of style.

The science of law was expounded in eminent works by Viktorin Cornelius ze Vsehrd (d. 1520) and Daniel Adam z Veleslavina (1546-99). The latter achieved great fame in consequence of his efforts for the development of literature and the scientific purification of the language.

It was at this time that one of the greatest monuments of Bohemian literature was produced by the Unity of Brethren, in the form of a complete translation of the Bible.

The battle of the White Mountain was the forerunner of a rapid decline in literature. In consequence of the merciless persecution of all who refused to yield to the Catholic Church, the best Bohemian families went into exile. The great teacher John Amos Komensky (1592-1671),

was forced to leave his country, and in foreign lands he wrote in the interest of and for the Bohemian people. In 1647 he came to London at the express wish of the Long Parliament. To his humanitarian work many English colleges owe their origin. And so high was this Czech humanist esteemed in England that on an old English engraving dated 1642 we find the following beautiful inscription:—

Loe, here an Exile, who to serue his God
Hath sharply tasted of proud Pashur's Rod,
Whose learning, Piety and true worth beeing knowne
To all the world, makes all the world his owne.

In other directions the literary decay seemed so complete that even eminent Bohemian scholars began to fear that the nation and its language would be extinguished.

A mighty impulse was necessary to awaken the people from their lethargy, and this came from two sources. First, from the west, as the result of the French Revolution, which aroused the self-consciousness of the nation; and secondly, from within, through the national reaction against the oppressive Germanising efforts of the Government. The leader of this new movement was an eminent student of Slavonic languages, Josef Dobrovsky (1753-1829), and next to him the historian, F. M. Pelcl (1734-1801).

The poetry of this time was the expression of the aims and aspirations of men who, with patriotic zeal and ardour, were striving to raise the standard of literary excellence to a level worthy of the Bohemian nation. Later, another



FORGET-ME-NOTS
From a lithograph by J. Manes

generation of eminent poets arose in F. L. Celakovsky, J. Kollar, and K. J. Erben (1811-1870), whose works have a well-established pre-eminence. Also, the eminent journalist Karel Havlicek showed up with biting satire the frivolousness of society in this time.

After the eventful year of 1848 there were again marked signs of the influence of foreign thought and style on the literature of Bohemia. The best exponent of this modern form unquestionably was Jan Neruda, who first introduced the light style of the *feuilleton*.

One of the most productive poets of the new era and the most versatile is Jaroslav Vrchlicky, who brought poetic language to perfection, although in the order of merit he is closely approached by Svatopluk Czech. Then we have Jul. Zeyer, an excellent writer of the romantic school, and J. V. Sladek, to whose genius we owe the new translation of Shakespeare's works.

Historical tales and romances founded on Bohemian historical incidents are worthily represented by the works of V. Benes Trebizsky and Alois Jirasek.

Special reference is due to our translators. Most foreign classical works are to be had in the Bohemian language, and many of the translations exhibit all the signs of conscientious and patient labour. This is especially evident in the series of Shakespearian plays which are well calculated to attract and favourably impress Bohemian readers with the wide-ranging genius of England's greatest dramatist and poet.

As proof of our high appreciation of English

literature, it is with pleasure that we state that before the war special arrangements had been made to issue as frequently as possible all the best examples of English literary work, and in this way build up what we may reasonably style our "English library." (Editor, J. Otto-Prague.)

Bohemian scientific literature can be said only to have made its first appearance in the nineteenth century, as previously Bohemian savants published their works either in German or Latin. However, the nationalisation of this branch of the work is progressing steadily. In the several departments of scientific writing, the names worthy of special mention are Fr. Palacky, Jos. Dobrovsky, P. J. Safarik, V. V. Tomek. Bohemian philology owes much to the labours of Jos. Dobrovsky, P. J. Safarik, Jos. Jungmann, M. Hattala. The history of literature has been dealt with by J. Dobrovsky, J. Jungmann, J. Vlcek, and V. Flajshans; history is represented by the works of Purkyne, Jos Krejci, Jan Palacky, Fric, and Celakovsky. Metaphysics has an excellent representation in the highly intellectual works of A. Smetana, Ot. Hostinsky, T. G. Masaryk. In the science of Law A. Randa, E. Ott J. Prazak, A. Zucher, Boh, Rieger, and Braf have achieved great eminence.

C. SPAL.

BOHEMIAN MUSIC

WHILE the Bohemians have always endeavoured to contribute their share to the advancement of art and science, it is in the department of music that they have won a most distinguished place in the front rank of civilised nations. In this art Bohemians have been prominent from ancient times. We must content ourselves with giving but a short sketch of musical history from the early part of the sixteenth century.

At this time we meet with the remarkably fine choral compositions of Jan Trojan Turnovsky, whose work, chiefly written for the service of the church, were mainly in the form of sacred songs and anthems for male voices. Some years his junior was Kristof Harant z Polzic, whose works exhibit marks of the influence of Palestrina—particularly in their harmonies. His contemporary was Jan Blahoslav, author of the first book on musical theory published in Bohemia, and one of the Bohemian Brethren under whose auspices so much good work was accomplished. During this period the choral singing of the male voice choirs reached a high standard of excellence.

Religious societies called "Sbory literatske" that numbered amongst them the wealthiest burghers of every town, were warm supporters of musical art, spending large sums in providing hymn-books, existing copies of which works now command a very high price.

In the seventeenth century the use of instrumental music in churches became more general, and Bohemians were to be found in every country where good instrumentalists were in demand. The style of Bohemian music in the eighteenth century has a strongly marked national character both in the melodies and their harmonic treatment, as shown in the compositions of the masters of counterpoint.

To the end of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth, the leadership in all that pertained to art was acknowledged by the musical world to be in the masterly hands of Beethoven and Mozart. Numbered in the ranks of their enthusiastic followers in Bohemia were the leading national composers, such as the refined and poetic pianist Jan Lad. Dusek and Mozart's great admirer, Vaclav Jan Tomasek.

During the reign of the romantic school in Germany the first original Bohemian opera was composed by that excellent musician Frant Skroup.

The earnest study of the beauties of national songs was the source of inspiration which led to the production of some characteristic works. The compositions of Bedrich Smetana exhibit to a marked degree the special beauties of the genuine Bohemian style. Although to a certain extent

"Býrali Čechové"

Maestoso

mf

mf

f

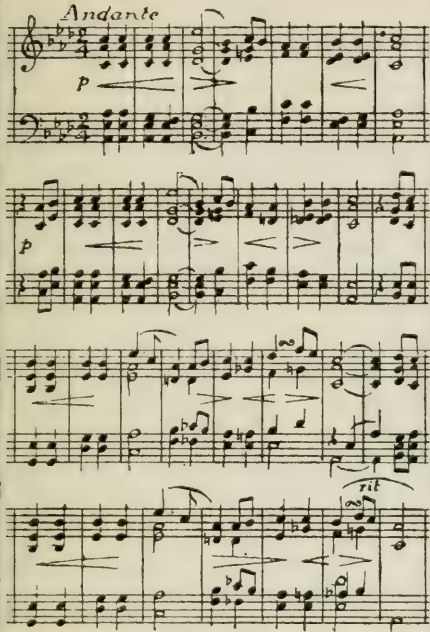
animato

f

HEROIC CZECH SONG

"Nad Berounkou"

Andante



POPULAR NATIONAL MELODY

influenced by Wagner, Smetana preferred the lyric and simple melodious form as being more in keeping with the Slavonic spirit. He is the composer of eight operas, of which the most popular are those illustrative of country life. His compositions have a wide range; as in addition to the operatic works referred to, he produced some of the most successful comic operas ever performed in Bohemia. The unquestioned merits of his many and varied works warrant his recognition as the founder of the modern Bohemian School of Composition.

Smetana's heir, as a worthy representative of the purely Slavonic in musical composition, was Antonin Dvorak, whose name is well known in England, where his fame is acknowledged by the frequent performance of many of his best works by the principal choral and orchestral societies.

Dvorak's start in life was very humble; he had more difficulties to overcome in the pursuit of education than the majority even of music's least favoured sons. But at first gradually, then rapidly, he advanced to fame, and the world's verdict was that in him a great master had arisen. The work which won for him the ear of all Europe was his "Stabat Mater," which speedily became a favourite especially in England, where it was first performed by the London Musical Society in 1883. This work rises above the strong influences of national feeling so generally found, as we have before remarked, in Dvorak's writings, and reaches a more cosmopolitan atmosphere challenging comparison with the most universally accepted settings of the Latin Hymn. Other compositions

are songs, very spontaneous and delicate, and pianoforte compositions, in all of which he has made very large use of national melodies and dance rhythms; also chamber music of great beauty.

Dvorak is a prominent example of the eagerness with which a certain school turned to folk-song and national dance as a fountain of inspiration. So long accustomed to Teutonic leadership, musical Europe gladly heard the new rhythms and strange harmonic effects of the Slav races. The characteristics of Dvorak's compositions are, first, the strong Czech element which pervades them and displays itself in characteristic rhythmical effects and relations of tonalities peculiar to Western ears; secondly, the economical and often extremely clever use of small thematic material.

Worthy to be associated with the names of Smetana and Dvorak is that of Zdenek Fibich (1850-1900), who ranks high as a composer of symphonies, grand overtures, and chamber music. His songs are very popular, but his most important works are in the form of grand opera, written after the style of Wagner. Fibich shows marked individuality in this art, which is refined and serious but not particularly expressive of Bohemian national feeling.

Other of Smetana's contemporaries and followers are Karel Bendl, Karel Sebor, Richard Rozkosny, Vilem Blodek, Jan Malat, and V. J. Novotny. Of the younger generation we have Dvorak's and Fibich's very promising pupils, Jos. B. Foerster, Karel Weiss, and Karel Kova-

rovic, now Director of the Opera of the Bohemian National Theatre. All these have produced works of excellent qualities. Amongst those who go on more independent lines are Lud Lostak, Lad. Celansky in Bohemia, Leo Janacek in Moravia.

Orchestral music and works for the piano and stringed instruments by Vitezslav Novak (1870) enjoy a well-deserved reputation for melodiousness and good scoring. With him must be associated Josef Suk, because the two afford an excellent contrast in style. The former is a strong upholder of national music of the Slovaks in Moravia and Northern Hungary and an extreme modernist in his symphonic songs and poems. Josef Suk, on the contrary, has a disposition for classic originals, compositions remarkable for their brilliant harmonic colouring as well as the flow of melody, reminding us strongly of the style of Dvorak.

The theory and history of the art has a growing literature to which have contributed Professor Otakar Hostinsky, Karel Stecker Eman. Chvala, and Karel Knittl. The Prague Conservatoire of Music, the first academy of music established in Austria, will soon complete its first century of beneficial work. The following are the names of violin pupils of the Prague Conservatoire who have won special distinction as artists: Fr. Ondricek, Fl. Zajic, Karel Hoffman (first violin in the famous Bohemian quartetto), V. Kopta, and the pupils of Professor Otakar Sevcik, Jaroslav Kocian and the world-famed Jan Kubelik.

In addition to the National Opera Theatre in Prague, which produces works of the highest

class, there are good opera houses in Plzen and Brno.

The art has the support of several excellent musical periodicals, journals, and gazettes, among which we would mention "Smetana" and "Dalibor."

DR. J. BRANBERGER.



PEASANT ART IN BOHEMIA

THE Bohemian peasantry, whose chief occupation until the middle of the nineteenth century was agriculture, created for themselves, on the basis of old traditions, an original style of arranging their homes, and their costumes. They had also their own poetry, music and dances, customs and ceremonies, all of which may be considered as the artistic side of Bohemian peasant culture and exhibiting in a striking manner the national characteristics in art and manufactures.

The loss of Bohemia's independence and the determination of the Government to Germanise her people were the causes that alienated the great mass of the population from the cultured class which was educated in the higher German schools. These educated people forgot their

nationality and sank their individuality, while the country people, on the other hand, lived their own old national style of life.

But the peasants in Bohemia were even during those times of oppression the owners of the soil they tilled, and they possessed so much innate energy and creative power as to make their surroundings sufficiently artistic to raise themselves above the dreary monotony of daily drudgery and preserve their national character.

The state of civilisation above described now belongs to the past. The upper classes of the nation are once more in sympathy with the people, and powerfully aid in raising the intellectual standard of the country and recruiting from the masses the best artists and men of letters. They now regard the traditional art of the peasants with pride as their own inheritance, seeing in it also the link that binds together the various branches of the great Slavonic race.

From 1880 upwards, memorials and relics of national art have been collected with great care in the Ethnographical and Historical Museums in Prague and in almost all of the larger towns in Bohemia.

Folklore, national art, and culture are made the object of intense study by a considerable number of literary men, who publish journals and beautifully illustrated works dealing specially with these subjects.

The characteristic feature of the various national costumes in Bohemia, more especially in the dress of the olden time, is the evident aim at producing a good effect not by the use of

expensive materials, but by the display of rich embroidery. In this respect the dress of the peasant class in Bohemia is akin to that of Moravia and other Slavonic countries.

In the different districts these ornamental trimmings vary as to the patterns and combination of colours, and often as to the manner of execution; but all agree in the common source of inspiration—Nature. The flowers and graceful foliage of the native soil, the opening buds and lovely blooms are full of suggestion to the embroiderer who requires no printed patterns; and while the marks of inherited tradition are always conspicuous, the designs, as before remarked, are as a rule the outcome of the technique employed.

More characteristic and varied, and even more interesting, are the embroideries from Moravia and the north-eastern part of Hungary. The Bohemians and Slovaks of Hungary are ethnographically one nation.

In the south of Moravia everything is decorated with work of floral designs, not only the dresses, but the walls of the dwellings, the furniture, mugs, dishes and plates, and of course the Easter eggs!

The people's art has developed now into an important home-industry.

RENATA TYRSOVA.



SOME TYPICAL CZECH ARTISTS

THIS inspiration of our peasant art, the true flower of the soil of Bohemia, speaks to us from all the real, sincere art of Czech masters. It speaks through different technic, through different medium. Manes, Hynais, Zenisek, Ales, Mucha, Uprka, are a few representative names of modern Czech art. The Slavonic element in these masters is unmistakable.

The memory of the rich flower decoration of Moravian cottages is so strong in Mucha that ornament becomes in his art an end in itself. In his decorative work "Our Father," he prays through exuberant design. It is not so much the depth of his inventions as the decorativeness of his

compositions; he forgets all languages; he speaks to God and men only through decorativeness. Much is a true Slav, for in his work there is the essential Slavonic element, a half-savage, half-superhuman mysticism. In Mucha's art the cosmopolitan influences have strangely overgrown the original Slavonic idea; they develop in him a new, spontaneous, and rich decorative expression.

Perhaps the most representative of modern Czech or Slovak artists is Joza Uprka. The love of Slavonic motives drove him out of academic pedantries to the typical people of Moravia and Slovakia. To that poetic corner of Europe Uprka gladly retired, not to dream, but to live and enjoy the richness of colour and ornament. And from his rich paintings comes the vigorous, healthy breeze of rural scenes, full of strong white light, full of perfume from the fields and meadows and gardens. His typical figures of humanity—old, grey-haired patriarchs, manly youths, or buxom young peasant women—are all in the daring rhythmic colours of the Slav national costume. Uprka's canvasses rebelliously but triumphantly dance in light and colour; the artist lives and feels with the subjects of his paintings: work in the meadows and fields, village life, joys, feasts, dances, prayers. In his art there is nothing melancholy; no shadows, no miseries, no dying, as if in his happy land people never died nor knew of death! Not, indeed, that Uprka never painted sombre scenes, but by a happy instinct he rushes from them towards light and joyful colour. His work, in its brilliant, direct technic,



SKETCH OF A PEASANT

By Joza Upkra

is a fine example of unspoiled national genius. Such buoyant energy our national organism, so permeated by German influence, sorely needs.

It is not mere chance that this master hails from Moravia, because from there and also from the healthy, unspoiled Slovaks, we Czechs expect the strengthening and rejuvenating of our national spirit and the purification of our national ideals. This truly is the great mission of Moravia, of her people and of her art.

Art to be real should be a natural phenomenon, an organic growth, as a tree growing from the soil that it nourishes. Uprka is such an artist, growing from the soil living amongst the peasants, equal among equals. Nowhere else could he live. A cosmopolitan city spoils men by its distracting influences. Uprka runs away from the city. He lives a simple life—works in the garden and on the fields, and paints—paints incessantly the sunlit simple people that he loves so well. That is all the biography that is of interest, or indeed necessary. Full of love of that corner of South Moravia, he works with marvellous intensity. His work will also be valued as a permanent and faithful record of the typical dress of our peasants, fast disappearing; their customs and ceremonies. The materialism of Western Europe, and the speculative Jew, begins to work a mission of barbarism even in that quiet, beautiful country.

The characteristic of Uprka's art—his joy of life, love of colour, glorification of light, all so intimately connected with the innate genius of our poetic peasants—is a triumphant augury for

the future of the Czechs. The Slav at last wakes up from melancholy to a joyful life.

M. Ales is a great poet amongst our artists. He draws old Slavonic heroes, dresses them and ornaments them with charms and implements and carvings. He is not a historian, but he dreams his poems so sincerely, and so fully is he immersed in his dreams that he carries us with him. Ales does not "draw" the public with wonderful and clever tricks of his palette or brush, but he who loves direct, simple art, the true Czech modesty of old times, and a pleasant and unaffected communicativeness, will find in Ales a pleasant, valuable companion. His art does not deceive; it is simple, honest, direct. The art of Ales is as simple as a national Czech melody. The decorative lunettes in the National Theatre in Prague were designed by Ales and Zenisek. They are monumental in the outlines of their figures, musical in the rhythm of their poses; lyricism vibrates in them everywhere.

Zenisek's work shows an individuality very different from that of foreign masters. We shall learn more and more of his art, and no distant future will show very clearly how much Zenisek's art was a pure Czech art.

Zenisek is Slav, Czech, and where other painters love compositions full of heroic pathos, structural distribution of masses, effects of grouping, Zenisek is all delicacy. He places in space figures musically conceived, simple effects of lines and coloured masses. His allegorical figures are simple to understand; their symbolism flows, as it were, melodiously as a Slavonic song, richly

modulated, here joyful, there tearful or festively lyric, nowhere "Secco recitativo," nowhere "parlando."

In the lyricism of his art Zenisek is a true follower of our great lyric painter J. Manes. Zenisek possesses an equal feeling for rhythmic lines and can express the sweet charm of the beautiful human figure. Like Manes he delights to draw lovable children, and understands the rhythmic sweetness of a child's uncertain steps and gestures. Like Manes he knows only a beautiful, healthy, strong man. The human body is to him, as to Manes, "Crown of the created world," the highest achievement of the Creator of Cosmos. (Quoted from F. X. Harlas.)

The influence of the historical memories of the tragic past on the contradiction of modern life is, in works of some Czech artists, strangely persistent. Such an artist is Holarek. His genius is a continuation of the spirit of John Hus, of the great Humanists, the Bohemian Brethren. Through the drawings of Holarek speaks the same undaunted spirit, the same tenderness, the same understanding of human frailty.

Holarek's Preface to his collection of drawings "Thoughts on the Catechism" speaks eloquently: "This protest of a suffering and martyred soul I give to human society in return for the artificial care with which she educated my heart to such a sensitiveness that, tremble under any emotion, and the sorrow of others feel above my own. The human Society took away from me even as a child the sweet egotism of nature, which is the child's happiness. Instead, she deeply instilled into me

the Christian teaching, and permitted the child's faith to depend upon an ideal happiness. So it was, only to deceive. But from the grown-up man she could not keep away her miserable reality nor hide from him her mercenary identity." Holarek unmasked the pseudo-Christianity of our intellectual society. He mercilessly contrasts the facts of reality with that "Brotherhood," that "Equality," that "Love of your neighbour," of which we all so volubly speak.

We cannot omit even from this brief note on Czech art the names of J. Marak, the poetic landscape painter; Hynais, Jansa, Setelik, Kupka, Kalvoda, Klusacek, Svabinsky; Brozik, Marold, and Cermak, the last three painters of wider European reputation, and K. Myslbek and Sucharda, the Czech sculptors.

F. X. Salda and Dr. Harlas have produced much valuable art criticism in the Czech language; their works form the beginning of a Slavonic philosophy of art—a serious inquiry into Slavonic artistic genius and its meaning to European civilisation.

J. PROCHAZKA.





CZECH FOLKLORE

OUR national lyric just as our national epic carries you away by the power of its simplicity and the directness of its art. By small means it attains ends which even a most profound poetry seldom attains. Here is not the naïve simplicity of poverty, but the restraint of an already fully matured refinement. It is difficult not to learn from these great masters of prose, and it will come to it that our folklore, just as our national song, will form a starting-point for a real understanding of the inner substance of stylistic art.

The Bohemian folklore or national tales about "St. Peter" or "Our Lord" (collected by Bozena Nemcova) are masterly products, showing not a God—or a St. Peter in some cosmopolitan meaning of these words, but rather beings of our flesh and blood—yet fully enshrined in the nobleness of their traditional meaning.

Peter lives a worldly, everyday life, but Christ is already not of this world, and cannot be measured by superficial appearances of things. And this conflict between the two worlds, higher and lower, is given with such masterful plasticity, with such nerve and skilful dramatisation of simple acts, that we could hardly find a similar work even amongst the greatest masters. One or two touches and the whole figure is as if chiselled from a rock. There is nothing aggressive, nothing fragmentary, all seems to evolve from itself, without any ostentatious "idea." It is a real model of moralism. It does not offend, does not labour, but with pleasant communicativeness, by way of humour, it glides into poetry, never into a sermon.

The humour emanating from these tales is quite its own. It is entirely original, grown from itself—our very own. It stands by itself in the whole European literature. In it there is nothing sermonising or puritanical as in English, nothing moralistic or melancholy as in Russian, nothing heavy as in German, nothing wordy as in French, but innocent human Czech humour, free from all these aberrations, pure as crystal. It is the humour of the poetic cottages of our peasants, humour that is not angry, quarrels not, but yet soars above all worldly vanity. In it is enshrined the whole outlook on life of our people, the calm and somewhat cheerful appreciation of a sorely tried man of the faults and mistakes of his fellow-man. Humour that only a man can master, who, in spite of all his troubles, is full of the joy of life. Even this humour will become a

starting-point of a serious study into the nature of our humour in general. Its foundations are already given in these tales, and what will be added can be only by way of enriching, not of changing. It is possible to learn, but not to imitate. We have something of our own that is beautiful and good.

Irony light as breath flows through all the incidents of these tales. But this irony does not disgust you with man, on the contrary, it reconciles and equalises; it teaches us to love, does not punish, but excuses; and it leads to good through goodness. It neither fumes nor rages; it is a man's consciousness of his own superiority over the whole surrounding world. The charm of this irony does not freeze, but it warms; it loves and teaches to love. This is the philosophic aspect of our folklore.

V. MRSTIK.

JOURNALISM

THE influence of the daily and periodical Press on the public life of Bohemia is far-reaching and beneficial in its effects, as it has been in other countries which enjoy the stimulating light that springs from the independent Press of a freedom-loving people.

The development of journalism throughout the country has been extraordinarily rapid. Since 1882, when there were in Bohemia proper only 145 newspapers, that number has increased more than three times over, and the "signs of

the times " lead us to anticipate a yet further progress. It is a fact of the most satisfactory kind, that the national thirst for knowledge grows, and it is to the Press that all classes in Bohemia look for the supply of their requirements.

The title of Bohemia's first newspaper was very short and to the point, "Novina," meaning "News." It contained reports of the important events of a most exciting time, the progress of the Turkish wars furnishing it with plenty of thrilling matter to fill its columns. Another journal was brought out in 1597, and published in Prague under the editorship of Daniel Sedlcansky, but the general disturbance caused by the Thirty Years' War had a blighting effect upon this journalistic venture.

Another attempt was made with but moderate results at the close of the seventeenth century, and it was not until 1719 that a great success was achieved by the publication of a paper called *The Prague Post News*, published every Tuesday and Saturday.

After its first successful launch, the *Prague Post News* continued a steady and prosperous course through changing times with a worthy succession of editors and under its original title until the year 1845, when the word "Post" was omitted, so that the old paper became henceforth known simply as *Prague News*.

The eventful year of 1848 had a great effect upon the Bohemian Press. With the dawn of liberty came Karel Havlicek, whose name will ever rank amongst the most brilliant of our

journalists. His premature death, an ever-to-be-regretted loss to his country, was no doubt accelerated by the cruel persecution to which he was subjected.

After the death of Havlicek the Press for a time was far from being in a flourishing condition, its leaders had a hard task in their battle against political reaction which threatened to crush the life out of any endeavours to promote a healthy development in the domain of journalism. This state of affairs lasted about ten years, when a marked change in the constitutional laws seemed to put new life into the people, whose patriotic spirit required a strong ally, such as can only be found in a fearless and independent Press. The great alliance of people and Press was proved to be a reality by the rapid increase in the number of newspapers and the expansion of their respective circulations. Thus in 1902 there were 752 Bohemian and Slovak periodicals published, forty-five of them issuing regular supplements. Of these, Prague publishes nine dailies. America has nine in the Bohemian language; Chicago alone has four. The remaining periodicals are issued in Moravia, Silesia, Vienna, and the Slavonic part of Northern Hungary.

As a matter of course the dailies published in Prague wield the greatest influence. In addition to daily and other papers, there are more than sixty reviews. Art and science have their special journals, several can boast of a long period of success. Prague is the chief publishing centre.

C. SPAL.

IN conclusion, it may be of interest to add that the three decorations in this book (on pages 4, 49, 58) are from actual designs by an old Czech peasant woman, and were originally intended for embroidery; they are, therefore, genuine examples of Czech peasant art. The two medallions, referring to the Signs of Zodiac (on pages 6, 52) have been adapted for book decoration from oil-paintings by J. Manes. On page 7 is reproduced the autograph signature of John Hus.

The London Czech Committee desire also to express their indebtedness and sincere thanks to Mr. G. K. Chesterton for his beautiful humanistic introduction; to the Rev. H. B. Workman, D.Litt., D.D., for placing his important work, "Letters of John Hus," at their disposal; and to Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth for the correction of the English text. Only those who had to deal with the Czechs' MSS. can appreciate the generous and disinterested help of Mr. Whitworth.

We Czechs residing in England cannot let this opportunity pass without thanking the whole British nation for the sympathetic treatment that we at the present time enjoy, and for the freedom with which we are permitted to organize our national affairs against the common enemy. Nor is this generous trust misplaced. We hope that in the near future we shall give some more practical and conclusive proofs of our loyalty.

THE LONDON CZECH COMMITTEE.

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